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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

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ROMANIACeausescu Receives New US Ambassador

The prompt reception of Ambassador Barnes by the Romanian President, who was fresh from his latest round of state visits, plus their unusually long discussion, indicate the importance that Ceausescu attaches to Romanian-US relations. The fact that commercial and economic questions dominated the discussion shows Bucharest's main interests in the relationship. Ceausescu expressed the usual concern over MFN, hoping that it could "be resolved by mid-summer so that it would not be lost in the rush for congressional adjournment in an election year."

On the political side, Ceausescu mentioned the Soviet-inspired drive for an international communist conference. He said that he did not think a world-wide conclave would take place for the next two or three years, but that the Soviets might succeed in arranging a European conference before the end of this year. On Romanian participation in such a meeting, Ceausescu attached the condition that "other parties must not be condemned," thus mirroring the recent article by Cornel Burtica in *Era Socialista*

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA-POLANDCooperation to be Intensified

The four-day visit to Poland of Czechoslovak party boss Husak produced no surprises. At a Warsaw rally on March 14, Polish party boss Gierek and Husak both called for the beginning of preparations for European and worldwide meetings of Communist leaders, and both had harsh words for the "anti-Socialist", "chauvinistic" policies of the Chinese.

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State Dept. review completed

The communique issued on the same day emphasized past friendship and cooperation and repeated several times that the two countries planned to "expand and deepen" their cooperation in all spheres of "political, state, economic, social, scientific, and cultural life."

YUGOSLAVIA

Role of New Yugoslav Cabinet "Councils" Outlined

Deputy Premier Anton Vratusa recently gave the public its first look at the workings of the Council on Questions of the Social-Political System and the Council on the Economy, two cabinet bodies that have received very little publicity since their creation last summer. According to Vratusa, the councils draft federal laws before they are considered by the federal assembly. As drafters of the "authoritative" version of legislation, the council members would seem to have considerable political power.

The problem of who originates draft laws was once a sore spot in relations between the federal executive council (cabinet) and the federal assembly. The assembly had pretensions toward a more independent political role during the 1966-1971 liberal era. Some assembly representatives, including a few top spokesmen, were openly bitter over the cabinet's monopoly on initiating legislation.

Any talk of aping the parliamentary democracies is however, no longer ideologically acceptable. Moreover, a new electoral system threatens to replace the old "professional politicians" in the assembly with "worker-delegates." The councils, therefore, will probably see very few of their draft laws challenged by parliamentarians.